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Statement submitted by Training for Women Network, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Statement

Across regions and countries, evidence suggests that sustainable development strategies that do not promote gender equality and the full participation and empowerment of women and girls will not succeed. As gender equality, in addition to being a human right, is also catalytic to social, economic and environmental progress, it should be well integrated into sustainable development policies, strategies and action plans.

Gender equality, poverty eradication and sustainable development are intrinsically linked. These linkages cut across the social, economic, environmental and governance dimensions of sustainable development. Acknowledging how development challenges and responses affect women, as well as women's vital contributions to economic progress, is essential for the success of sustainable development and poverty eradication policies and practices. Initiatives that engage women as full stakeholders have proven to enhance sustainable livelihoods of local communities and national economies. The success of a post-2015 sustainable development framework depends on translating existing policy promises on gender equality and women's empowerment into concrete actions. Entrenching women's rights within the outcomes, commitments and governing frameworks for sustainable development will enhance human rights frameworks.

Women are key economic actors and agents of sustainable development and consumption. As primary caretakers of families, communities and natural resources, women have accumulated specific knowledge and skills about local conditions and ecological resources. Furthermore, research has shown that women are more inclined than men to choose sustainability as a lifestyle, engage in environmentally appropriate behaviour and make sustainable consumption choices. It is critical to ensure that women participate equally and meaningfully in decision-making and control of sustainable development efforts. Particular attention needs to be paid to the active participation and leadership of indigenous women, migrant and refugee women and women from minority groups. Obstacles that impede women's economic empowerment and participation should be addressed, including gender-based discrimination that impedes and undervalues women's contributions to sustainable development. Enhancing gender equality requires targeted approaches to changing attitudes, behaviours and structures and discriminatory social norms and customary, common and statutory laws. Investing in women and girls will not only enhance gender equality, but will also promote cleaner and more equitable development and drive progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the broader sustainable development goals.

Equating sustainable development solely with green growth overlooks the social aspects of development and reduces striving for sustainability to a purely technological exercise. Focusing on achieving a sustainable and equitable economy will promote human well-being in the short and long term. This requires a paradigm shift so that economic thinking is driven by equity.